

4
KAMP, KANAWANA HISTORY - 1951

It was in the year 1892 that Y.M.C.A. camping for boys in Montreal got its start. During that summer Mr. D. A. Budge, the General Secretary of the Association, made a fishing trip to Lac Des Isles. Mr. D. W. Ross, a Director of the Association, accompanied Mr. Budge. The train at that time went only to St. Jerome - beyond that the trip was made by horse and cart.

It was just at this time that camping for boys was being discussed by Association Secretaries and Boards. A few Associations had opened camps. Mr. Budge and Mr. Ross were greatly impressed by the Laurentian country. They talked about the possibilities of a camp for boys and young men.

In the fall of 1892 a Committee of Messrs. J.W. Ross, W.E. Cushing, W.W. Wilson, T. Duncan Patton and W.H. Ball, was appointed. Plans were laid during the fall and winter months. In the spring of 1893 a trip was made to the Ste. Agathe region, the area was explored. At that time little was known of the region and this group of "Gentlemen Adventurers" toured the country over "Cordurey" roads in buckboards and thoroughly investigated the lakes and islands by boat.

After much searching a site was chosen on Lac St. Joseph at St. Adolphe de Howard - the islands seemed an excellent spot for a camp and at that time the shores were heavily wooded and had not been swept by fire - the fishing was excellent.

And so plans were made for the first camp. The equipment consisted of six tents - a marquee for a dining tent - all cooking was done over an open fire.

During the summer of 1900 the attendance was thirty-seven boys and seventy-two young men. The dining marquee had been replaced by a log cabin and kitchen at a cost of \$700.00.

During the following years interest grew rapidly in the camp, and it was recognized by Association leaders that one camp could not house both boys and young men. Early in 1910 a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. R.L. Charlton was constituted to look for a new site for the boys' camp.

During the late winter months of 1910 Mr. Charlton and his Committee of Messrs. R.B. Ross Jr., and L. Cushing made a trip to the Laurentians to choose the camp site. After some searching the group arrived at St. Sauveur and commenced to walk at night over the hills to Lac Marois. Running into a rain and snow storm the Committee lost its way and stayed overnight at a farmhouse. The next day the country was explored and Lake St. Louis, the present site, was located.

Great foresight was shown by the Committee in suggesting the purchase of all the shore line on the lake.

A short time later Mr. J. W. McConnell purchased the land around Lake Desjardins. This he presented to the Y.M.C.A., and the lake was renamed "Lake Wilson" after Mr. McConnell's son.

A great deal of thought was given to choosing a name for the camp. Mr. Charlton suggested Kanawana which was like the name of a Furness Steamer. At a later meeting the name Kanawana was adopted, which means in the Indian

language "lots to eat". The first prospectus therefore called the Kamp Kanawana. The name of the lake was also changed from St. Louis to Lake Kanawana.

The true story of the early days would not be complete without pointing out to use Mr. Charleton's own words, "That a great deal of prayer and waiting on God was engaged in while the camp was being chosen and equipped, and there is no doubt that God's hand was in it, judging by the success which has since attended the camp."

In the years following the opening of the camp, additional property was purchased so that today the camp encompasses all of Lakes Kanawana, Wilson, and Round Lake, plus a sizeable part of the shoreline on Lake Becksie.

With the purchase of the property expansion plans were made which necessitated carving the camp out of the rugged wilderness of rock and forest. Bushland had to be cleared - rocks removed, ground levelled for tents - playing fields, a road built - buildings - wharves, etc.

Early during the camp the lower pavilion on the lake front was constructed. In 1920 the present dining hall and kitchen unit was completed. In 1927 the lodge and museum was built. In 1936 the Bantam cabins were erected. In 1938 the water system and latrines constructed, 1939 the showers installed. In 1942 the Junior cabins were built and fourteen new tent platforms constructed for the Intermediate and Senior camps. Canvass cots were introduced throughout the Senior, Intermediate, and Junior camps.

In the fall of 1942 the Camp Board reviewed the housing accommodation and embarked upon a building campaign to construct seven new open-sided cabins in the Junior Section of the camp, and fourteen new tent platforms in the Intermediate and Senior Sections of the camp. Much consideration was given to structural design and layout of the new units, and under the supervision of Mr. Ross Wiggs, plans were finalized early in October. Permission was secured from the construction controller to embark upon the building program and the lumber and other supplies ordered. E. C. Page undertook the contract of building the structures.

Mr. Roy Locke became Camp Chief during the summer of '47. Since that time several new innovations have developed such as a completely new main wharf, new cabin for the Senior Section Director, electrification of the camp with a new automatic water system with controlled chlorination, and electric refrigeration.

Plans are now underway to build a new boat house to replace the lower pavillion. It is planned to construct this boat house next September. those of you who will be back with us next year will have the advantage of using this new facility.

The story above has concerned mainly buildings and equipment, but never let us forget that these are merely land marks on the road to building fine Christian Character. The physical development of the property only suggests that year by year the camp is improving. If our program and leadership had not retained its fine calibre through the years, Kanawana could not

have continued as long. All of us in this room have an opportunity of writing another page in the history book of Manawana. Let us try to make this page the brightest in the book.